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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BOYLE NAMED CHAIR OF PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION FOR 2008

LINCOLN – Anne Boyle of Omaha will serve as chair of the Nebraska Public Service Commission for 2008.

The five-member Commission at its first meeting of 2008 on January 8 unanimously elected the two-term commissioner, who represents the eastern segment of Douglas County within the city of Omaha. Other commissioners are immediate past chair Rod Johnson of Sutton, Frank Landis of Lincoln, Tim Schram of Gretna, and Jerry Vap of McCook. Landis was elected vice chair.

Boyle said she has seen many changes in telecommunications in the 11 years that she has served on the Commission. “Few used email in 1996. Today it is used around the world. Cell phones were in their infancy and today more than 250 million are in use. We were just discovering the magic of the Internet and had never heard the term ‘VOIP’”

Maintaining the telecommunications network is one of the challenges the Commission continues to face during her tenure as chair. That is particularly a pressing problem in Nebraska, she noted. “We must seek the most cost efficient means to provide high grade service to all Nebraskans including areas with a diminishing population in our rural areas where it is more expensive to operate. Telecommunications is a necessity for everyday use, commerce and public safety to all Nebraskans. We cannot afford to ignore it.”

She said the importance of telecommunications to the people of Nebraska is daunting. “Unlike roads or some other services, if our telecommunications systems are not maintained and upgraded, a failure could create an immediate crisis shutting down the ability to call emergency help, to transact business or to simply call our neighbors.”

Boyle said she would continue to be active in both state and federal venues on behalf of Nebraska consumers. She said the Commission, which is the utility regulatory arm of Nebraska state government, has asked the Legislature authority to investigate consumer complaints with cell phone providers.

She is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC); NARUC Consumer Affairs Committee; NARUC Telecommunications Committee; North American Numbering Council; and, the Board of Directors of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC).

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